



## EPA: 'Forever chemicals' pose risk even at very low levels

By MATTHEW DALY  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Environmental Protection Agency is warning that two nonstick and stain-resistant compounds found in drinking water are more dangerous than previously thought — and pose health risks even at levels so low they cannot currently be detected.

The two compounds, known as PFOA and PFOS, have been voluntarily phased out by U.S. manufacturers, but there are a limited number of ongoing uses and the chemicals remain in the environment because they do not degrade over time. The compounds are part of a larger cluster of "forever chemicals" known as PFAS that have been used in consumer products and industry since the 1940s.

The EPA on Wednesday issued nonbinding health advisories that set health risk thresholds for PFOA and PFOS to near zero, replacing 2016 guidelines that had set them at 70 parts per trillion. The chemicals are found in products including cardboard pack-



Environmental Protection Agency administrator Michael Regan speaks at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, in Greensboro, N.C., April 14, 2022.

Associated Press

aging, carpets and fire-fighting foam

At the same time, the agency is inviting states

and territories to apply for \$1 billion under the new bipartisan infrastructure law to address PFAS and other

contaminants in drinking water. Money can be used for technical assistance, water quality testing, con-

tractor training and installation of centralized treatment, officials said.

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**Continued from Front**

Several states have set their own drinking water limits to address PFAS contamination that are far tougher than the federal guidance. The toxic industrial compounds are associated with serious health conditions, including cancer and reduced birth weight.

"People on the front-lines of PFAS contamination have suffered for far too long," EPA Administrator Michael Regan said in a statement. "That's why EPA is taking aggressive action as part of a whole-of-government approach to prevent these chemicals from entering the environment and to help protect concerned families from this pervasive challenge."

PFAS is short for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, which are used in nonstick frying pans, water-repellent sports gear, stain-resistant rugs, cosmetics and countless other consumer products. The chemical bonds are so strong that they don't degrade or do so only slowly in the environment and remain in a person's bloodstream indefinitely.

The revised health guidelines are based on new science and consider lifetime exposure to the chemicals, the EPA said. Officials are no longer confident that PFAS levels allowed under the 2016 guidelines "do not have adverse health impacts," an EPA spokesman said.

While the new guidelines set acceptable risk below levels that can currently be measured, as a practical matter EPA recommends that utilities take ac-



The sun sets behind the control tower of the former Loring Air Force Base, Saturday, July 18, 2020, in Limestone, Maine.

Associated Press

tion against the chemicals when they reach levels that can be measured — currently about four parts per trillion, a senior administration official told reporters Tuesday night.

The EPA said it expects to propose national drinking water regulations for PFOA and PFOS later this year, with a final rule expected in 2023.

In a related development, the EPA said that for the first time it is issuing final health advisories for two chemicals that are considered replacements for PFOA and PFOS. One group is known as GenX chemicals, while the other is known as PFBS. Health advisories for GenX chemicals were set at 10 parts per trillion, while PFBS was set at 2,000 parts per trillion.

The agency said the new

advisories provide technical information that federal, state and local agencies can use to inform actions to address PFAS in drinking water, including water quality monitoring, use of filters and other technologies that reduce PFAS and strategies to reduce exposure to the substances.

Environmental and public health groups hailed the announcement as a good first step. Advocates have long urged action on PFAS after thousands of communities detected PFAS chemicals in their water. PFAS chemicals have been confirmed at nearly 400 military installations and at least 200 million Americans are drinking water contaminated with PFAS, according to the Environmental Working Group, a research and advocacy organization.

"EPA had the courage to follow the science. This is a step in the right direction," said Stel Bailey, co-facilitator of National PFAS Contamination Coalition.

"The science is clear: These chemicals are shockingly toxic at extremely low doses," added Erik Olson, senior strategic director for health and food at the Natural Resources Defense Council. He called on the EPA to regulate all PFAS chemicals "with enforceable standards as a single class of chemicals."

Melanie Benesh, legislative attorney for the Environmental Working Group, said the EPA's announcement "should set off alarm bells for consumers and regulators" alike. She urged the EPA to "move much faster to dramatically reduce exposures to these

toxic chemicals."

The American Chemistry Council, which represents major chemical companies, said in a statement that while it supports development of drinking water standards for PFAS based on the best available science, the EPA's announcement "reflects a failure of the agency to follow its accepted practice for ensuring the scientific integrity of its process." While the advisories are non-binding, "they will have sweeping implications for policies at the state and federal levels," the group said. "These new levels cannot be achieved with existing treatment technology and, in fact, are below levels that can be reliably detected using existing EPA methods."

The Chemours Co., a DuPont spinoff that uses so-called GenX chemicals to produce high-performance fluoropolymers used in semiconductors, mobile phones, hospital ventilators and other products, called the EPA's announcement "fundamentally flawed."

EPA "disregarded relevant data and issued a health advisory contrary to the agency's own standards and this administration's commitment to scientific integrity," Chemours said in a statement. The company is "already using state-of-the-art technologies at our sites to abate emissions and remediate historical releases" Chemours said, adding that officials are evaluating next steps, "including potential legal action, to address the EPA's scientifically unsound action." □



A sign indicating a "Medical Facility Quiet Zone" is displayed outside the Jackson Women's Health Organization clinic in Jackson, Miss., the state's only state licensed abortion facility, Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2020.

Associated Press

## U.S. abortions rise: 1 in 5 pregnancies terminated in 2020

By **CARLA K. JOHNSON**

The number and rate of U.S. abortions increased from 2017 to 2020 after a long decline, according to figures released Wednesday. The report from the Guttmacher Institute, a research group that supports abortion rights, counted more than 930,000 abortions in the U.S. in 2020. That's up from about 862,000 abortions in 2017, when national

abortion figures reached their lowest point since the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that legalized the procedure nationwide.

About one in five pregnancies ended in abortion in 2020, according to the report, which comes as the Supreme Court appears ready to overturn that decision.

The number of women obtaining abortions illustrates

a need and "underscores just how devastating a Supreme Court decision is going to be for access to an absolutely vital service," said Sara Rosenbaum, a George Washington University health law and policy professor.

Texas saw a 2% decrease between 2019 and 2020, coinciding with pandemic-related abortion restrictions in the state. □

# GAO: US didn't track if its aid was used in Yemen attacks

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Pentagon and the State Department failed to investigate whether a Saudi-led coalition used arms or other materiel bought from U.S. suppliers in attacks alleged to have killed civilians in Yemen, a U.S. government report released Wednesday says.

The findings may undermine the reliability of assurances from a series of U.S. administrations that Americans were working to minimize civilian harm from strikes by two major strategic partners and arms-buyers, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, in a now 7-year war against Iranian-allied rebels in Yemen. Publication of the critical report comes the day after the White House confirmed that President Joe Biden plans a July trip to Saudi Arabia in a bid to bolster relations with the oil-producing kingdom. Biden took office denouncing Saudi Arabia over civilian deaths in Yemen and the 2018 killing of U.S.-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

Biden, a Democrat, also pledged at the outset of his term that the United States would withhold any U.S. of-



A Yemeni soldier inspects a site of Saudi-led airstrikes targeting two houses in Sanaa, Yemen, March 26, 2022.

Associated Press

fensive military aid to Saudi Arabia, in response to the bogged-down Saudi-led war in Yemen.

News organizations and rights groups have cited repeated civilian deaths blamed on airstrikes by the coalition. That includes a 2018 strike on a school bus that killed at least 26 children, according to Human Rights Watch, and other airstrikes have been re-

ported on wedding parties and other civilian targets. The U.S. says it has worked to train Saudi forces on improved targeting and other best practices to minimize civilian casualties.

The United Nations estimates that from March 2015 to August 2021 about 23,000 airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen killed or injured more than 18,000 civilians. Under

U.S., U.N. and other international mediation, all sides in the conflict have joined in what U.S. officials say is a promising truce this spring and summer.

Houthi rebels are also widely accused of rights violations, including forcing children to fight and profiting off food and fuel desperately needed by civilians. Yemen is the poorest country by far on the Arab

peninsula. Aid groups and international organizations say the war has greatly deepened food insecurity for millions of people there. The General Accounting Office examined how well the U.S. government has tracked any role that extensive U.S. military aid to its two Gulf strategic partners, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, played in civilian deaths.

Congress commissioned Wednesday's report from the GAO last year. The GAO is meant to be an independent watchdog assisting government oversight. The version of the report released Wednesday withholds what the government says is classified material from the original version, which was not made public.

The U.S. has provided more than \$54 billion in military support to Saudi Arabia and the UAE since 2015, when Saudi-led troops launched attacks, through 2021. State Department officials told the GAO investigators they consider civilian harm and how equipment is used when weighing U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia, the report said. □

# High court rules against government on drug reimbursement

By JESSICA GRESKO

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Supreme Court said Wednesday that the federal government improperly lowered drug reimbursement payments to hospitals and clinics that serve low-income communities, a reduction that cost the facilities billions of dollars.

The high court ruled unanimously in a case involving payments for drugs, largely for cancer, that are used by Medicare patients in hospital outpatient departments. The Biden administration had stood by a Trump administration decision to reduce the payments.

The government had said that the hospitals and clinics, because of their special status serving low-income communities, are able to buy the drugs at a

deep discount. The government said reimbursing the hospitals, called 340B hospitals, at the same rate as other hospitals that pay more created an incentive for the hospitals to overprescribe the drugs or prescribe more expensive drugs. It said that lowering the reimbursement would also save Medicare beneficiaries money in co-payments because those are linked to reimbursement rates.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote for the court that "absent a survey of hospitals' acquisition costs" the Department of Health and Human Services "may not vary the reimbursement rates for 340B hospitals. HHS's 2018 and 2019 reimbursement rates for 340B hospitals were therefore contrary to the statute and unlawful."

In a statement, the American Hospital Association and other groups involved in the case called the decision a "decisive victory for vulnerable communities and the hospitals on which so many patients depend." They hope to work with the administration and the courts on a reimbursement plan.

The case before the justices involved Medicare, which provides health insurance for nearly 60 million people age 65 and older or people with certain disabilities. Under Medicare, health care providers get reimbursed by the government for expenses including drugs used in hospital outpatient departments.

Hospitals had been getting reimbursed at a rate based on the average price of the drugs. But in 2018 the Trump administration said



The U.S. Supreme Court building on Capitol Hill in Washington, June 9, 2022.

Associated Press

that 340B hospitals and clinics, which serve low-income communities, would be reimbursed at a lower rate. That's because 340B hospitals and clinics are entitled to discounts from drug manufacturers that let them buy drugs at a lower cost. The administration cut

the reimbursement rate by nearly 30%, an annual decrease to 340B hospitals and clinics of about \$1.6 billion.

Affected hospitals sued and a federal judge initially ruled for them, but that decision was reversed by an appeals court. □

# Federal transit agency orders improvements to Boston system

By **MARK PRATT**  
**Associated Press**

**BOSTON (AP)** — Federal transportation officials issued a series of orders to the Boston area's troubled public transit agency Wednesday to address what they called "longstanding issues" with the system's "overall safety program and safety culture."

The Federal Transit Administration's four "special directives" require the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority to better staff its operations control center; improve track maintenance; address unintended and uncontrolled train movements in maintenance facilities and rail yards; and ensure that all employee training certifications are up to date.

The FTA started a review of the MBTA in April following several recent accidents that led to injuries or death. The FTA issued a fifth directive to the state Department of Public Utilities — which is responsible for safety oversight of the MBTA's rail transit operations — to enforce the other directives.

The MBTA — known locally as the T — is already developing a plan to implement the orders.



Investigators at the scene of a crash between two Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, or MBTA, light rail trains, July 30, 2021, in Brookline, Mass.

**Associated Press**

"Examining the actions required by the FTA, the MBTA is developing immediate and long-term mitigation measures to address these matters," the T said in a statement. "The MBTA will share its plans with the FTA in the coming days and weeks."

The T has made \$8 billion in infrastructure and vehicle investments in the past five years in an effort to make it "a transit industry leader in safety and reliability," the T

said.

There have been several safety problems on the system in the past year, including a crash involving two Green Line trains June 1 that sent four employees to the hospital.

A 39-year-old man died in April when his arm got stuck in a malfunctioning subway car door and he was dragged along the platform. Nine people were injured in September when an escalator at

a station malfunctioned, and more than two dozen people went to the hospital last July when a Green Line train rear-ended another trolley.

The T's operations center, which houses the dispatchers and others who coordinate train movements throughout the system, is understaffed, and that staff is not adequately trained, the FTA said.

The lack of staffing has meant that dispatchers

have had to work shifts of up to 20 hours, followed by only four hours off.

"Taken together, MBTA has created a management process whereby (operations control center) staff members are required to work without certifications, in a fatigued state, and often fulfilling multiple roles at once," the FTA said.

As an example of maintenance issues, the FTA's review found that a section of Orange Line track has been under speed restrictions since 2019 due to excessive wear and defects. The T was ordered to repair the track.

The FTA also found that since Jan. 1, 2021, the MBTA has reported five runaway trains in yards or during maintenance-related movements, including two that occurred in May during the review.

"Failure to properly secure disabled trains, including trains with insufficient brakes or propulsion systems, and failure to properly secure disabled trains in yards and maintenance facilities is a significant safety risk," the order said.

The T said as of this week, all rail transit employees, including at the operations center, will be certified. □

# Odessa, Texas, without drinking water as temperatures soar



Water pools around City of Odessa Water Distribution crews as they work to repair a damaged water main Tuesday, June 14, 2022, in Odessa, Texas.

**Associated Press**

**ODESSA, Texas (AP)** — Crews worked to restore water service Wednesday to the West Texas city of Odessa, where residents have been without water

this week amid scorching temperatures after an aging pipe broke.

The city's water treatment plant was back online by about 8 a.m. Wednesday,

and utility officials said it could take 12 to 14 hours for the "recharging" process, during which workers slowly add water back into the system to ensure there are no more leaks.

The city water system's 165,000 customers' taps lost pressure or went completely dry after the 24-inch (61-centimeter) main broke Monday afternoon, according to the city's social media pages.

Temperatures were forecast to approach 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) later Wednesday as Texas — like much of the United States — faced extremely hot and humid conditions. And while Odessa typically sees hot weather in June, the timing of the break made

dealing with this week's heat more difficult.

Resident Nikki Friday told The Associated Press that the city is providing bottled water and that people with wells are offering neighbors water from hoses. She also said tanker trucks have been parked around town to fill buckets with water.

"Drinking water has not been an issue," Friday said. "We just need water to return to our daily lives and within the community."

Lifelong Odessa resident Lynda Wright said water service has not been lost across the city in the more than five decades that she has lived there. She said she picked up water and ice from Midland, a 15-minute drive from her home. Wright said her family had

drinkable water stored in jugs that they used to wash their hands and brush their teeth, and that her family hooked her house up to a well on her property to provide water to flush toilets.

"We just dropped a hose in the (water) line," she said. Wright said she noticed water began running again around noon, but that the pressure had not yet returned to regular strength. The city, which is located about 330 miles (530 kilometers) west of Dallas, planned to distribute water to residents at Ector County Coliseum as well as deliver water to nursing homes. Water tankers were placed strategically around the city to respond to any fires, said Deputy City Manager Phillip Urrutia. □

# EU sues U.K. over move to rewrite post-Brexit trade rules

By **SAMUEL PETREQUIN and JILL LAWLESS**

**Associated Press**

**BRUSSELS (AP)** — The European Union sued Britain on Wednesday over its move to rewrite the trade rules agreed to when the country left the EU two years ago, ratcheting up tensions between the major economic partners.

Earlier this week, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government proposed legislation that would remove customs checks on some goods entering Northern Ireland from the rest of the U.K. Those checks were imposed as part of a hard-fought compromise when Britain left the EU and its borderless free-trade zone but have caused both economic and political problems in Northern Ireland, where some say they undermine the region's place in the United Kingdom.

The EU has decried Britain's effort to rip up part of the deal.

"Let's call a spade a spade: This is illegal," European Commission Vice President Maroš Šefčovič told a news conference in Brussels on Wednesday.

The EU's decision to pursue legal action raises the possibility that either or both sides could impose punishing tariffs on the other. Šefčovič refused to rule out



**European Commissioner for Inter-institutional Relations and Foresight Maros Sefcovic holds up documents as he speaks during a media conference at EU headquarters in Brussels, Wednesday, June 15, 2022.**

**Associated Press**

such a move Wednesday. But the prospect of trade war still seemed a distant possibility since both would suffer and have said they want to find a solution outside of the courts.

According to the latest EU figures, the 27-nation bloc is the U.K.'s biggest trading partner, while the U.K. is the EU's third-biggest trading partner after the U.S. and China.

At the heart of the dispute and the whole reason a compromise was needed in the first place are concerns about stability in Northern Ireland, which

is the only part of the U.K. that shares a border with an EU country, namely Ireland. The checks were imposed in order to keep that border open because that is a key pillar of the peace process that ended decades of violence in Northern Ireland.

But British unionists in Northern Ireland say the new checks have put a burden on businesses and frayed the bonds between the region and the rest of the U.K. The rules have also led to a political crisis in Northern Ireland, where the main

unionist party blocked the formation of a new power-sharing government in Belfast, saying it won't take part until the Brexit trade rules are scrapped.

Šefčovič, the EU commission official, said he's willing to keep talks going with the U.K. but insisted solutions should be found within the original agreement, called the Northern Ireland Protocol.

The British government called the EU's move "disappointing."

"The U.K.'s preference remains for a negotiated

solution but the proposals set out by the EU today are the same proposals we have been discussing for months," it said.

It added that it had to act because the protocol was undermining Northern Ireland's peace accord by "disrupting trade and leading to people in Northern Ireland being treated differently to the rest of the U.K."

While there are serious disagreements between the two sides, the events of this week also reflect maneuvering as each tries to wrangle the best deal from the other.

The legislation the British government proposed will take months to wind its way through Parliament, and officials appear to be hoping they will get a new deal with the EU in the meantime.

That seems unlikely. Officials in the EU and member country governments are incensed at what they see as the U.K.'s intention to break international law. Johnson's government insists its unilateral move is lawful, but many lawyers and lawmakers including some in his governing Conservative Party disagree.

The so-called infringement procedure that the EU renewed Wednesday likewise will take months to unfold. □

## China's Xi reasserts support for Russia on security issues

**BEIJING (AP)** — Chinese President Xi Jinping reasserted his country's support for Russia on issues of sovereignty and security in a phone call with Russian leader Vladimir Putin on Wednesday, state media said.

Xi told Putin that "all parties should responsibly push for a proper settlement of the Ukraine crisis," according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

The Kremlin said in its account of the call that Putin "outlined his fundamental assessments of the situation in Ukraine." Xi "noted the

legitimacy of the actions taken by Russia to protect the fundamental national interests in the face of challenges to its security created by external forces," according to Moscow's official readout. China has refused to criticize Russia's invasion of Ukraine or even to refer to it in such terms, while accusing NATO and the West of provoking Moscow into attacking.

Weeks before the Russian attack, Putin and Xi met in Beijing in February and oversaw the signing of an agreement pledging that relations between the sides

would have "no limits." It remains unclear whether Xi knew at the time of Russia's plan to invade Ukraine.

In that meeting, the two leaders pushed back against U.S. pressure, declaring their opposition to any expansion of NATO and affirming that the island of Taiwan is a part of China, as they met hours before the Winter Olympics kicked off in Beijing.

Xi told Putin on Wednesday that China "is willing to work with the Russian side to promote the steady and long-term development of bilateral pragmatic coop-



**Chinese President Xi Jinping, right, and Russian President Vladimir Putin talk to each other during their meeting in Beijing, China, Friday, Feb. 4, 2022.**

**Associated Press**

eration," Xinhua reported, "China is willing to, together with Russia, continue to support each other on issues concerning core interests and major concerns such as sovereignty and security."

While offering its tacit support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine, China has sought to appear neutral and avoid possible repercussions from supporting the Russian economy amid international sanctions. □

# Thousands protest 'bulldozer justice' against Indian Muslims

By **BISWAJEET BANERJEE**  
**LUCKNOW, India (AP)** —

Protests have been erupting in many Indian cities to condemn the demolition of homes and businesses belonging to Muslims, in what critics call a growing pattern of "bulldozer justice" aimed at punishing activists from the minority group.

On Sunday, authorities in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh rode on a bulldozer to raze the home of Javed Ahmad, who they said was connected to Muslim religious protests that turned violent last Friday. Police arrested Ahmad on Saturday.

The protests were sparked by derogatory remarks about Islam and the Prophet Muhammed made recently by two spokespeople of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party. The party suspended one of them and expelled the other, issuing a rare statement saying it "strongly denounces insults of any religious personalities."

Bulldozers also crushed the properties of protesters



**Authorities demolish the residence of activist Javed Ahmad they say has been constructed illegally in Prayagraj, India, Sunday, June 12, 2022.**

**Associated Press**

in two other cities in Uttar Pradesh last week. In April, authorities in New Delhi used bulldozers to destroy Muslim-owned shops days after communal violence in which dozens were arrested. Similar incidents have been reported in other states. "The demolitions are a gross violation of consti-

tutional norms and ethics," Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay, a specialist on Hindu nationalist politics and biographer of Modi, told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, 12 prominent people, including former Supreme Court and High Court judges and lawyers, sent a letter to India's chief

justice urging him to hold a hearing on the demolitions, calling them illegal and "a form of collective extrajudicial punishment." They accused the Uttar Pradesh government of suppressing dissent by using violence against protesters.

Two people who were protesting the remarks by the

governing party spokespeople died of gunshot injuries in clashes with police on Friday in Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand state. Several Muslim-majority countries have also criticized the remarks, and protesters in Bangladesh called for a boycott of Indian products, leaving India's government scrambling to contain the diplomatic backlash.

Violence has been increasing against Muslims by Hindu nationalists emboldened by Modi's regular silence on such attacks since he was elected prime minister in 2014.

Muslims have been targeted for their food or clothing, or over inter-religious marriages. The rights groups Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have accused Modi's party of looking the other way and sometimes enabling hate speech against Muslims, who comprise 14% of India's 1.4 billion people, but are the second-largest Muslim population of any nation. Modi's party denies the accusations. □

# Strategist: Last Australian government lost Chinese votes



**A truck sponsored by conservative lobby group Advance Australia displaying an image of Chinese President Xi Jinping casting a vote for the Australian opposition Labor Party drives down a local street, Saturday, April 9, 2022, in the Parramatta area of Sydney.**

**Associated Press**

By **ROD MCGUIRK**  
**Associated Press**  
**CANBERRA, Australia (AP)** —

The previous Australian government's stance against a more aggressive China drove away many Chinese-Australian voters at recent elections who considered the adminis-

tration's language had licensed racism, a campaign strategist said on Wednesday.

Former Prime Minister Scott Morrison's conservative coalition government lost elections last month after almost a decade in power to the center-left Labor

Party.

Labor's campaign director Paul Erickson on Wednesday blamed coalition rhetoric on China for significant vote swings toward Labor in electorates with large Chinese-Australian populations.

"The feedback that we got was that there was a view that the government's response to the more aggressive and assertive behavior of the Chinese Communist Party and the government in Beijing came across in the community actually at times as an attack on Chinese-Australians or rhetoric that licensed racism in the community," Erickson told the National Press Club.

Of Australia's population of 25 million, 1.2 million have Chinese ancestry, according to the most recent census.

Senior figures in the coalition government had argued that Beijing had

wanted Labor to win the election because Labor lawmakers were less likely to stand up for Australian interests against Chinese economic coercion.

A conservative lobby group Advance Australia had displayed ads on the sides of trucks during the election campaign that depicted Chinese President Xi Jinping casting a vote with the slogan: "CCP says vote Labor."

Morrison had labeled Labor's deputy leader Richard Marles "the Manchurian candidate," the title of a 1959 novel about the son of a prominent U.S. political family who is brainwashed by Chinese authorities to become an unwitting assassin.

Senior ministers also had pointed to China and the Solomon Islands announcing a security pact during the campaign as an attempt to undermine

the coalition's reelection chances.

Labor described the pact as Australia's worst foreign policy failure in the Pacific since World War II.

New Foreign Minister Penny Wong will fly to the Solomons on Friday in an attempt to improve bilateral ties.

Former Defense Minister Peter Dutton, who since the election has replaced Morrison as leader of the conservative Liberal Party, argued during the campaign that pro-Labor communication on the Chinese social media platform WeChat was evidence that Beijing wanted the government to change.

Maree Ma, general manager of Vision Times, a leading Chinese-language Australian media outlet, said WeChat exchanges were more positive toward Labor than they had been in the last election in 2019. □

# Study: Facebook fails to catch East Africa extremist content

By CARA ANNA  
Associated Press

**NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)** — A new study has found that Facebook has failed to catch Islamic State group and al-Shabab extremist content in posts aimed at East Africa as the region remains under threat from violent attacks and Kenya prepares to vote in a closely contested national election.

An Associated Press series last year, drawing on leaked documents shared by a Facebook whistleblower, showed how the platform repeatedly failed to act on sensitive content including hate speech in many places around the world.

The new and unrelated two-year study by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue found Facebook posts that openly supported IS or the Somalia-based al-Shabab — even ones carrying al-Shabab branding and calling for violence in languages including Swahili, Somali and Arabic — were allowed to be widely shared. The report expresses particular concern with narratives linked to the extremist groups that accuse Kenyan government officials and politicians of being enemies of Muslims, who make up a significant part



A customer uses the Wi-Fi on her mobile phone at an internet cafe in the low-income Kibera neighborhood of Nairobi, Kenya on Sept. 29, 2021.

Associated Press

of the East African nation's population.

The report notes that "xenophobia toward Somali communities in Kenya has long been rife."

The al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab has been described as the deadliest extremist group in Africa, and it has carried out high-profile attacks in recent years in Kenya far from its base in neighboring Somalia.

The new study found no evidence of Facebook posts that planned specific

attacks, but its authors and Kenyan experts warn that allowing even general calls to violence is a threat to the closely contested August presidential election. Already, concerns about hate speech around the vote, both online and off, are growing.

"They chip away at that trust in democratic institutions," report researcher Moustafa Ayad told the AP of the extremist posts.

The Institute for Strategic Dialogue found 445 pub-

lic profiles, some with duplicate accounts, sharing content linked to the two extremist groups and tagging more than 17,000 other accounts. Among the narratives shared were accusations that Kenya and the United States are enemies of Islam, and among the posted content was praise by al-Shabab's official media arm for the killing of Kenyan soldiers. Even when Facebook took down pages, they would quickly be reconstituted

under different names, Ayad said, describing serious lapses by both artificial intelligence and human moderators.

"Why are they not acting on rampant content put up by al-Shabab?" he asked. "You'd think that after 20 years of dealing with al-Qaida, they'd have a good understanding of the language they use, the symbolism."

He said the authors have discussed their findings with Facebook and some of the accounts have been taken down. He said the authors also plan to share the findings with Kenya's government.

Ayad said both civil society and government bodies such as Kenya's national counterterrorism center should be aware of the problem and encourage Facebook to do more.

Asked for comment, Facebook requested a copy of the report before its publication, which was refused. The company then responded with an emailed statement.

"We've already removed a number of these pages and profiles and will continue to investigate once we have access to the full findings," Facebook wrote Tuesday, not giving any name, citing security concerns. □

# Brazil court approves home grown cannabis for medical use

By DEBORA ALVARES  
Associated Press

**BRASILIA, Brazil (AP)** — A top court in Brazil on Tuesday authorized three patients to grow cannabis for medical treatment, a decision that is likely to be applied nationwide in similar cases.

A five-judge panel of the country's Superior Court of Justice unanimously agreed that the three patients can grow cannabis and extract its oil for use in pain relief. Brazilian law currently limits the medical use of marijuana-derived products to imported goods.

Brazil's health ministry is yet to regulate home cultivation of cannabis for medical use, which puts anyone

doing it at the risk of arrest. Judge Rogério Schietti said the top court's panel acted because the government had failed to take a scientific position on the issue.

"The discourse against this possibility is moralistic. It often has a religious nature, based on dogmas, on false truths, stigmas," Schietti said. "Let us stop this prejudice, this moralism that delays the development of this issue at the legislative, and many times clouds the minds of Brazilian judges."

Judge Antonio Saldanha said that "there is a deliberately backward action toward obscurantism" in Brazil's government's delay. The country's health ministry did not respond to a

request for comment from The Associated Press.

President Jair Bolsonaro, a far-right politician facing a tough battle to get reelected in October, said in June 2021 that he disagreed with any authorization for Brazilians to grow marijuana at home, no matter their aim. Former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the main leader of the leftist Workers' Party, leads all opinion polls to return to the job he held in 2003-2010.

Uruguay is the only South American country where the use of marijuana is legal even for recreational use. Argentina's approved on May 27 a law to regulate the medical use of cannabis and established



Demonstrators hold a banner that reads in Portuguese: "Medical Cannabis Now," during a legalization of marijuana march in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Saturday, June 11, 2022.

Associated Press

a regulatory agency to control how patients obtain seeds and marijuana derived products.

The Brazilian court's decision follows protests in Brazil in favor of medical cannabis on June 11. □

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## Fourth SuperNova event will be taking place soon

ORANJESTAD - On June 13, 2022, The Prime Minister of Aruba, Evelyn Wever-Croes, held a press conference at the site of FUTURA to announce another initiative of SuperNova for girls about STEM.

SuperNova contributes to and stimulates gender equality as indicated in SDG 5, which guarantees that no one is left behind. The Prime Minister emphasized the importance and priority, as female Prime Minister, wherever possible, to create more opportunities and possibilities for women and girls.

The pandemic hurt the world, but women and children were mostly affected. The Prime Minister emphasized that support for this group is essential to make up for the loss of the ad-



vancements made in the past.

The Prime Minister stated

that the jobs in the STEM sector (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) are increas-

ing globally in comparison to other sectors. Thus is very important to motivate and prepare our girls to explore STEM.

place on June 18, 2022, for girls between 6 and 9 years old. This year's subject: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).□



"Not all girls will pursue a career in the STEM sector. But we can start a unique spark of interest and introduce them to this sector and show them that STEM is an attractive sector with many possibilities for girls.

Historically, this sector has been mainly dominated by men. But slowly, we are noticing a change, although not in balance yet. That is why the Government supports this SuperNova and hopes to see many girls participating. The fourth SuperNova event takes

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## Minister Geoffrey Wever inaugurates "BeYourOwnBoss" training in San Nicolas

ORANJESTAD - On Tuesday, June 7, 2022, the Minister of Economic Affairs, Communications and Sustainable Development, Mr. Geoffrey Wever, inaugurated the kick-off of the training for young people "BeYourOwnBoss" in San Nicolas.

Both in San Nicolas and Oranjestad, a group started this training. This educational program is a collaboration between Qredits Aruba and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Communications, and Sustainable Development. The goal is to equip people with an entrepreneurial spirit with the necessary knowledge and skills for the entrepreneurial world.

Minister Wever is pleased with the "BeYourOwnBoss" program which encourages entrepreneurship in Aruba in an engaging, practical, and innovative manner. After being sworn in as Minister, the request from Qredits Aruba for cooperation and financial contribution for the educational programs such as "BeYourOwnBoss" and "Small Business Academy" and a support program for reduced interest rates for small businesses, was one of Minister Wever's first projects. Minister Wever believes in stimulating the economy of Aruba, encouraging entrepreneurship, and investing in our youth. As a result, his ministry has provided a financial contribution to Qredits Aruba

to assist in the financing and implementation of this necessary program for our youth with entrepreneurial ambition and to make the price of participation in the program more attractive.

The training started on June 7, 2022, and will end on July 28, 2022. Over eight weeks, the training will be given twice a week from 6:30-9:00. The educational program will cover several topics: the entrepreneur, the customer, the business, the figures, mini-case study and the pitch. Participants will create an entrepreneurship portfolio and put their ideas into practice through a pitching moment. 94 persons signed up to participate in the training. Since they reached the maximum number of participants, those who have not been able to participate in the training will attend the upcoming August 2022 "BeYourOwnBoss" training.

"I am very pleased with the interest among participants to develop and prepare for the world of entrepreneurship. This program helps with working on the attitude of an entrepreneur through various exercises. I wish the group attending the training in San Nicolas and the group attending the training in Oranjestad great success!" Minister Geoffrey Wever stated. □



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## AHATA: RevPAR recovered by 83% in first 5 months of 2022

Oranjestad - The Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association has published the latest hotel performance data reporting that in May 2022 Aruba hotels experienced a 78% average occupancy rate. After low performances in the first two months of 2022, occupancy continued to grow in subsequent months.

### May 2022:

Occupancy: The occupancy rate was 78%, which is 3% less than in 2019.

ADR: In comparison to 2019, the average daily rate (for occupied rooms) increased by 16% to \$262.20.

RevPAR: The revenue per available room was \$205.61, which is a 13% increase over 2019.

### Year-to-date 2022:

Occupancy: The average occupancy for the first five months of 2022 was 69%, which is 20% less than in 2019.

### OCCUPANCY FORECAST:

	Occupancy Forecast	Recovery compared to 2019
June	79%	95%
July	81%	91%
August	79%	91%
2022	73%	86%

ADR: The average daily rate (for occupied rooms) increased by 4% to \$325.88.

RevPAR: The revenue per available room was \$225.40, a 17% decrease from 2019.

### Timeshare:

AHATA's Timeshare properties experienced a



86% occupancy rate in May, and project an average occupancy of 83% in June 2022.

### AHATA member hotels:

Amsterdam Manor Beach Resort, Barceló Aruba, Boardwalk Boutique Hotel, Brickell Bay Beach Club, Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, Courtyard by Marriott, Divi & Tamarijn All-Inclusive, Eagle Aruba Resort, Holiday Inn Resort Aruba, Hyatt Regency Aruba, Hyatt Place Aruba Airport, Manchebo Beach Resort, Marriott Aruba & Stellaris Casino, Paradera Park, Rehoboth Peaceland Boutique Hotel, Renaissance Wind Creek Aruba Resort, The Ritz-Carlton Aruba, RIU

Palace Aruba, RIU Palace Antillas, Talk of the Town Hotel.

### AHATA member timeshares:

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### AHATA member vacation rentals:

Aramis Real Estate, Aruba's Life Vacation Residences, Aruba Happy Rental, Casiola Aruba, Cobalt Blue Fusion (Blue, Azure), Ford Property Management, Turibana Plaza, Santa Lucia Landhuis. □

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# How to afford summer road trips amid high gas prices

By **SALLY FRENCH** of Nerd-Wallet

A summer road trip used to be a cost-effective, easy getaway. This year, soaring gas prices and expensive rental cars might make you think twice about hitting the road.

According to the American Automobile Association, a federation of motor clubs throughout North America, the average gas price was \$4.60 per gallon nationally before Memorial Day weekend. Some experts believe the national average might even top \$5 later in the summer.

Plus, rental car prices hit record highs during the pandemic, up 38.6% in February 2022 versus February 2020, according to a Nerd-Wallet analysis of U.S. Consumer Price Index inflation data.

But those roadblocks don't necessarily mean you have to put the brakes on travel completely. You might just have to shift your road trip plans. Here's how.

## CONSIDER CHANGING YOUR DESTINATION

If you're open-minded about your vacation destination, consider driving through a region with below-average gas prices. On June 1, 10 states had average gas prices below \$4.30 per gallon for regular grade gasoline, according to AAA data.

Those states, ranked from cheapest to most expensive, were:

1. Georgia.



A gasoline pump is shown at a gas station Friday, June 10, 2022, in Salt Lake City.

Associated Press

2. Arkansas.
3. Kansas.
4. Mississippi.
5. Oklahoma.
6. Missouri.
7. Louisiana.
8. Nebraska.
9. South Carolina.
10. Texas.

Given how many of those states border each other, it'd be fairly easy to plan a road trip through the South or Midwest. You could start in St. Louis, and make the roughly four-hour drive on Interstate 70 across the state to Kansas City, Missouri. Make time for a pit stop in Columbia, which is a quintessential college town with the University of Missouri. Boonville is another great stop, where you can tour Warm Springs Ranch, home of the iconic Budweiser Clydesdales. (Walking tours start at \$15.) From

Kansas City, it's about three hours on to Omaha, Nebraska, where you can try the allegedly original Reuben sandwich.

## BE STRATEGIC ABOUT RENTAL CARS

If you're renting a car, understand that rental car prices can vary dramatically depending on the rental company, whether you're renting from an airport location versus downtown, and how far in advance you book.

Speaking of renting a car, this might be the year you rent an electric vehicle. The EV may have a more expensive rental price, but it could be cheaper than renting a gas-powered car and filling its tank. AAA has a helpful gas calculator tool that factors in the type of car and where you're driving to help you see the

trade-offs.

Hotel and vacation rental companies also are making it easier to search for accommodations that offer electric vehicle charging. More hotels are promoting electric vehicle charging as a hotel perk, right alongside traditional amenities like pools and breakfast buffets. Many hotels even allow you to charge your car at no cost.

If rental car prices are brutally high, consider booking with alternative rental car companies like Turo or Getaround, which can be cheaper than a major car rental company. Many of these companies are relatively new and allow you to book cars directly from the owners, functioning as an "Airbnb for cars."

For example, the cost of a weeklong car rental from

San Francisco International Airport during the first week of July for a standard, gas-powered car like a Volkswagen Jetta would average about \$640. Head to peer-to-peer car-sharing site Turo, and there are more than a dozen Teslas available to book in San Francisco on the same dates for less than \$800.

If you filled the Jetta's roughly 13-gallon gas tank twice at \$6 a gallon (which isn't unheard of in some states like California), you'd pay more than \$150 in gas. That cost plus the rental would have you paying roughly the same amount as booking the Tesla.

With so many variables, it pays to shop around before you make reservations.

## KNOW WHERE TO FIND THE CHEAPEST GAS

If driving a gas-powered car is non-negotiable, master the art of saving money on gas. Download apps like GasBuddy, which track local gas prices and can help guide you to the cheapest station near you. It also helps to drive more efficiently. Adjusting how you speed up, brake or use cruise control can have an impact on your gas usage. And if all else fails and you're stuck with a gargantuan gas bill, at least earn rewards for your spending through a rewards credit card.

The best gas credit cards can typically net at least 3% back in rewards for your gas station spending. □

# Cuba sugar harvest only half of expected; sector in 'crisis'

**HAVANA (AP)** — Cuba, once legendary for its sugar cane, produced only about half the sugar it had hoped to this season, and authorities acknowledged that while they will cover internal demand they will not be able to meet their international commitments.

"It's not a secret, the sector is in crisis," Dionis Pérez, director of communication at Azcuba, the government agency that regulates sugar production on the island, told reporters Wednesday. "This year

Pérez did not say how much sugar had been harvested, but at the end of last year Economy Minister Alejandro Gil said the state plan was to produce 911,000 tons this sugar harvest, which concluded in May. The percentage given by Pérez would mean that production was about 482,000 tons.

The figure is half the 800,000 tons harvested in 2020-2021 and is the lowest figure in at least 100 years. In the 1980s, Cuba produced up to 8 million tons of sugar a year.

Pérez said the reasons for this season's low production include a shortage of herbicides and fertilizers, a delay in starting up sugar mills, and even a lack of oxygen — which was hoarded by the health sector to combat COVID-19 — needed to repair breakages. He also blamed a lack of fuel and spare tires due to U.S. sanctions.

He said it was not realistic to compare current sugar production to that of the 1980s. "I had 150 (sugar) mills then, now I have 56.



Farmers use machetes to weed a sugar cane field in Madruga, Cuba, Thursday, April 29, 2021.

Associated Press

Fifty-four of those were active, and of those 54 only 35 contributed to the harvest." □

# CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 42 Sports setting
  - 1 Under
  - 6 Get up
  - 11 Sheepish
  - 12 Miles of music
  - 13 Tower setting
  - 14 Libya neighbor
  - 15 Houdini feat
  - 17 Hole number
  - 19 Ump's call
  - 20 Soaking site
  - 23 Distresses
  - 25 Foray
  - 26 Like films in early trailers
  - 28 Quaker's pronoun
  - 29 Prove false
  - 30 Blue
  - 31 Comic Caesar
  - 32 "Far out, dude!"
  - 33 Ballroom dance
  - 35 Humidor item
  - 38 Horse opera
  - 41 Saw
- DOWN**
- 1 Short cut
  - 2 Juan
  - 3 Set free
  - 4 Subtraction column
  - 5 Mat word
  - 6 Skilled
  - 7 Latest fad
  - 8 Wall climber
  - 9 Small drink
  - 10 Superlative suffix
  - 16 Germany neighbor
  - 17 Suit piece
  - 18 Island greeting
  - 20 Soaked
  - 21 Michelangelo work
  - 22 Said further
  - 24 Reuben base
  - 25 Brit. fliers
  - 27 Colonist's foe
  - 31 Tatter
  - 33 Jail cell
  - 34 Fast runner
  - 35 Upper limit
  - 36 Altar
  - 37 Ozone, for one
  - 39 Finale
  - 40 Bright beam

S	P	E	L	L	G	A	M	E
C	A	G	E	Y	T	O	N	A
A	L	G	A	E	H	A	I	T
R	A	C	K	J	E	T	S	E
A	C	E	C	A	B	E	E	
B	E	L	L	O	W	E	D	
S	L	A	M	L	U	S	T	
	Y	E	L	L	O	W	E	D
R	I	M	H	A	S	E	R	A
A	N	A	L	O	G	C	A	R
S	T	R	U	M	F	A	T	A
P	R	I	C	E	U	T	I	C
S	O	A	K		N	O	T	E

## Yesterday's answer

- 1 Short cut
- 2 Juan
- 3 Set free
- 4 Subtraction column
- 5 Mat word
- 6 Skilled
- 7 Latest fad
- 8 Wall climber
- 9 Small drink
- 10 Superlative suffix
- 16 Germany neighbor
- 17 Suit piece
- 18 Island greeting
- 20 Soaked
- 21 Michelangelo work
- 22 Said further
- 24 Reuben base
- 25 Brit. fliers
- 27 Colonist's foe
- 31 Tatter
- 33 Jail cell
- 34 Fast runner
- 35 Upper limit
- 36 Altar
- 37 Ozone, for one
- 39 Finale
- 40 Bright beam

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11					12				
13					14				
		15			16				
17	18			19			20	21	22
23			24			25			
26					27				
28				29					
30			31			32			
		33				34			
35	36	37			38		39	40	
41					42				
43					44				

6-16

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

6-16

## CRYPTOQUOTE

M Q G Z E Q O C Q C A E R J A B Z

M K X X . O C Q C Q Q X J A B O C Q

C A E J Q . Z R V O C Q J H P X Q A B Z R

Q R Y X P J C H Z R . — D Z H Q J D A S L Q

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: A GOOD PHOTOGRAPH IS KNOWING WHERE TO STAND. — ANSEL ADAMS

# U.S. report: nearly 400 crashes of automated tech vehicles



A Tesla owner charges his vehicle at a charging station in Topeka, Kan., Monday, April 5, 2021.

Associated Press

By TOM KRISHER  
AP Auto Writer  
DETROIT (AP) — Automakers reported nearly 400 crashes over a 10-month period involving vehicles with partially automated driver-assist systems, including 273 with Teslas, according to statistics released Wednesday by U.S. safety regulators.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration cautioned against using the numbers to compare automakers, saying it didn't weight them by the number of vehicles from each manufacturer that use the systems, or how many miles those vehicles traveled.

Automakers reported crashes from July of last year through May 15 under an order from the agency, which is examining such crashes broadly for the first time.

"As we gather more data, NHTSA will be able to better identify any emerging risks or trends and learn more about how these technologies are performing in the real world," said Steven Cliff, the agency's administrator.

Tesla's crashes happened while vehicles were using

Autopilot, "Full Self-Driving," Traffic Aware Cruise Control, or other driver-assist systems that have some control over speed and steering. The company has about 830,000 vehicles with the systems on the road.

The next closest of a dozen automakers that reported crashes was Honda, with 90. Honda says it has about six million vehicles on U.S. roads with such systems. Subaru was next with 10, and all other automakers reported five or fewer.

In a June 2021 order, NHTSA told more than 100 automakers and automated vehicle tech companies to report serious crashes within one day of learning about them and to disclose less-serious crashes by the 15th day of the following month.

The agency is assessing how the systems perform and whether new regulations may be needed.

Six people were killed in the crashes involving driver-assist systems, and five were seriously hurt, NHTSA said. Of the deaths, five occurred in Teslas and one was reported by Ford. Three of the serious injuries were in Teslas, while Honda and Ford each reported

one.

Tesla's crash number may appear elevated somewhat because it uses telematics to monitor its vehicles and get real-time crash reports. Other automakers don't have such capability, so their reports may come slower or crashes may not be reported at all, NHTSA said. A message was left seeking comment from Tesla.

Tesla's crashes accounted for nearly 70% of the 392 reported by the dozen automakers. Although the Austin, Texas, automaker calls its systems Autopilot and "Full Self-Driving," it says the vehicles cannot drive themselves and the drivers must be ready to intervene at all times.

Auto safety advocates said driver-assist and self-driving systems have potential to save lives, but not until NHTSA sets minimum performance standards and requires safety improvements to protect all road users.

"It's clear that U.S. road users are unwitting participants in beta testing of automated driving technology," said Cathy Chase, president of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety.

Sen. Edward Markey, D-Mass., said although NHTSA's data has limitations, it's not isolated evidence that Tesla has ignored regulations and putting the public in danger. There have been "a never ending parade of reports" of Teslas on automated systems rolling through stop signs or braking for no reason, he said.

NHTSA also is investigating Teslas that crash into parked emergency vehicles.

"As today's data suggests, this contempt for auto safety laws has real-world consequences," Markey said while urging NHTSA to take enforcement action.

Manufacturers were not required to report how many vehicles they have on the road that have the systems, nor did they have to report how far those vehicles traveled, or when the systems are in use, NHTSA said. □

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# So long, Internet Explorer. The browser retires to- day

By **RICHARD JACOBSEN**  
**SAN FRANCISCO (AP)** — Internet Explorer is finally headed out to pasture. As of Wednesday, Microsoft will no longer support the once-dominant browser that legions of web surfers loved to hate — and a few still claim to adore. The 27-year-old application now joins BlackBerry phones, dial-up modems and Palm Pilots in the dustbin of tech history. IE's demise was not a surprise. A year ago, Microsoft said that it was putting an end to Internet Explorer on June 15, 2022, pushing users to its Edge browser, which was launched in 2015. The company made clear then it was time to move on.

"Not only is Microsoft Edge a faster, more secure and more modern browsing experience than Internet Explorer, but it is also able to address a key concern: compatibility for older, legacy websites and applications," Sean Lydersey, general manager of Microsoft Edge Enterprise, wrote in a May 2021 blog post. □

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# Julie Andrews at AFI honor: 'I've been the most lucky lady'

By **MIKE CIDONI LENNOX**

**Associated Press**

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Julie Andrews was honored by the American Film Institute last week for a Hollywood career that couldn't have started more supercalifragilisticexpialidocious-ly — with an Oscar-winning performance in a film that would become an instant classic: "Mary Poppins."

Before the AFI Life Achievement ceremony, which airs Thursday night at 8 p.m. Eastern on TNT, the 86-year-old Andrews recalled landing her first major movie gig.

"Walt Disney gave me my first big chance and I learned so much on that film. It was a wonderful film to learn the craft of moviemaking on because there were so many special effects, so much waiting around, so many complicated things to do because it was animated as well," Andrews told The Associated Press. "It was a wonderful learning film to start my career with."

A musical adaptation inspired by the beloved P.L. Travers children's novels about a magical nanny, it first hit theaters in late August 1964. Quickly, "Mary Poppins" was a commercial and critical smash, becoming the year's highest-grossing film released in North America. It earned 13 Os-



**Actor Julie Andrews accepts the 48th AFI Life Achievement Award during a gala honoring her, Thursday, June 9, 2022, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.**

**Associated Press**

car nominations including best picture, and won in five categories, including best actress for Andrews. Just six months after "Poppins" hit big screens, along came what would be not only Andrews' biggest hit — but one of the all-time box-office successes: the adaptation of Rodgers & Hammerstein's stage smash "The Sound of Music." Andrews played the real-life Maria von Trapp, the nun-turned-schoolteacher-turned-stepmother and matriarch of the Trapp Family Singers. Originally released in early March 1965, the film would

stay in cinemas for more than four years. And while the critics weren't nearly as kind to it as they were to "Poppins," the academy again showed its love, with 10 nominations and five wins. There was no statuette for Andrews, but winning best picture was a great consolation.

On both the arrivals line and at the ceremony, Andrews spoke of "Sound of Music," but only in general terms. "I've been the most lucky lady, because happening to be in the right place at the right time and having the wonderful direc-

tors and people that I've worked with and just learning my craft and learning what it's all about. I never expected it to be like that." Fortunately, the celebrity guests inside the AFI tribute made it clear that "The Sound of Music" and Andrews are among their favorite things.

Viewers will discover recording artist Gwen Stefani says she idolized Andrews since childhood, after seeing "The Sound of Music" at the cinema with her parents. Decades later, Stefani was in a studio writing with Pharrell Williams, in a session

that eventually resulted in Stefani's 2006 hit "Wind it Up." The tune ended up incorporating elements of a key "Sound of Music" song, "The Lonely Goatherd," which didn't thrill Williams. "Obviously, I had to fight with Pharrell to get that in there," Stefani recalled. "And it was a big fantasy of mine to be able to have that incredible sample in my song — it made the song. And it's a dream come true. So, I've always been way too nervous to meet my idol. But tonight's the night and I'm ready. I am beyond honored. I can't believe this is happening."

The special includes guests representing chapters of Andrews' careers through the decades, including longtime friend and TV partner Carol Burnett, whose 1971 "Julie and Carol at Lincoln Center" won them Emmys; actor Hector Elizondo, her co-star in the two "Princess Diaries" films (2001, 2004); Steve Carell, who worked with Andrews on the upcoming animated "Minions: The Rise of Gru," and Bo Derek who portrayed the titular perfect "10" in the 1979 comedy written and directed by Andrews' late husband and frequent collaborator Blake Edwards. He and Andrews were married for 41 years, until his death in 2010. □

# Dolly Parton gives \$1M to infectious disease research, again



**Dolly Parton performs at Austin City Limits Live during Blockchain Creative Labs' Dollyverse event during the South by Southwest Music Festival on March 18, 2022, in Austin, Texas.**

**Associated Press**

**NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)** — Dolly Parton is donating \$1 million to pediatric infectious disease research at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, the organization announced on Wednesday.

The new gift is one of several Parton has made to the center over the years, including a \$1 million gift in April 2020 for COVID vaccine research. That gift helped Vanderbilt researchers test an array of drugs aimed at reducing the life-threatening symptoms associated with COVID-19, the center said in a news release. Researchers are also looking at entirely

new therapies to both treat COVID-19 and prevent infection.

Parton's new gift will support a variety of ongoing research at the medical center, including understanding how viruses and bacteria cause disease, understanding and preventing antibiotic resistance, preventing and treating infections, diagnosing and treating infections in children with cancer, and gauging the impact of childhood infections throughout the world, according to the news release.

"Dolly's previous support to infectious disease research, and also our pediatric can-

cer program, has already saved countless lives," said Dr. Jeff Balser, president and CEO of Vanderbilt University Medical Center and dean of the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. "This new gift will bolster our defenses against future threats to the safety of this region and society as a whole."

Parton said she supports the work because she loves children.

"No child should ever have to suffer," Parton said in a news release. "I'm willing to do my part to try and keep as many of them as I can as healthy and safe as possible." □

# Winter Olympics may not include Nordic combined for 1st time

By LARRY LAGE

Nordic combined, which uniquely tests skiers on jaw-dropping jumps and heart-pounding trails, has been a part of the Winter Olympics since 1924. Its time might be up.

It is the only Olympic sport without women and the International Olympic Committee is due to make a decision later this month about whether to allow women to compete in Nordic combined at the 2026 Milan-Cortina d'Ampezzo Games.

There is the possibility, however, that Nordic combined is dropped entirely from the Olympics, according to athletes and advocates.

"What I heard loud and clear in back channels is that the solution to take care of the gender equity dirty secret is to take men out of the program for 2026," said Billy Demong, a five-time Olympian in Nordic combined and member of USA Nordic's board of directors. "To take away one of the original sports from the first Winter Olympics would be tragic, short-sighted and misguided."

The IOC said final decisions on the 2026 Olympics program of medal events are scheduled to be decided at a June 24 meeting of its executive board, chaired by president Thomas Bach.



United States' Annika Malacinski competes during the Nordic combined World Cup mixed team normal hill HS 106, in Val di Fiemme, Italy, Jan. 7, 2022.

Associated Press

"We're seeing sports such as ski mountaineering added and I'm hearing the IOC does not want to increase the number of athletes and the solution is take men out of Nordic combined," Demong said Tuesday in an interview with The Associated Press.

Men in the Nordic combined have been publicly pushing on social media and elsewhere for women to be included, adding a mixed team format as another Olympic medal event, and are now bracing for their future as athletes on the world's stage.

Jasper Good, who competed for the U.S. earlier this year at the Beijing Olympics, said he was "blindsided" by the possibility.

"Information is trickling to us from athlete groups from around the world and national governing bodies, and most of us didn't realize the sport is in jeopardy," he said.

International Ski Federation Nordic combined race director Lasse Ottesen said he has not heard officially from the IOC about men potentially being eliminated from the Olympic program.

"We do hear speculation from different sides," Ottesen said Wednesday. "If the IOC, for some reason, would make a decision not to include women for the '26 events, what would happen with the men's? Would that be sort of a signal to say you're on for the '26 events, but for '30, we are thinking gender equality and then the men are out."

Nordic combined skiers must have finesse and fearlessness for ski jumping while training to have the strength and stamina necessary for a 10-kilome-

ter cross-country course. The athlete who wins the ski jumping stage starts the cross-country race in the front of the pack, followed by the rest of the competition in their order of finish and then they race to the line for gold.

While Nordic combined is a fringe sport in the United States, it is very popular in parts of Europe and Japan. "It's really big in countries like Norway, Germany and Austria," U.S. Olympic Nordic combined skier Jared Shumate said. "Those three countries usually dominate the world cup podiums, and Olympic podiums. And obviously, we don't have quite the same fame."

Annika Malacinski is one of dozens of women around the world who have sacrificed a lot of time and money to go for Olympic gold. The 21-year-old Malacinski, who has American-Finnish dual citizenship and competes for the U.S., had high hopes of competing in China dashed in 2018.

The IOC executive board considered denied an application then that would have allowed her and other women to compete in Nordic combined at the Beijing Games. IOC sports director Kit McConnell said then that development in terms of the universality, competitiveness, and following was needed. □

# Moncada's five hits, five RBIs lead White Sox past Tigers

By DAVE HOGG

**DETROIT (AP)** — Yoán Moncada had five hits and five RBIs, including a run-scoring single against Kody Clemens, and the Chicago White Sox beat the Detroit Tigers 13-0 on Wednesday for a three-game series sweep.

Moncada, Danny Mendick and Seby Zavala homered for Chicago, which had dropped four of five before arriving in Detroit. José Abreu had four hits and drove in two runs, and Andrew Vaughn had three hits.

The White Sox finished with 22 hits, compared to four for the Tigers. Davis Martin

(1-2) pitched 5 1/3 innings of three-hit ball for the win. Tigers manager A.J. Hinch gave up on his pitching staff after six innings, using position players Harold Castro for the seventh, Clemens for the eighth, and Tucker Barnhart for the ninth.

It was the pitching debut for the 26-year-old Clemens, whose father, Roger, won seven Cy Young Awards. Kody Clemens was charged with a run and three hits — one more than he has managed in his 23 career at-bats.

Tigers starter Alex Faedo (1-3) allowed seven runs and nine hits in three-plus innings.

The White Sox grabbed a 3-0 lead on Moncada's third homer with two out in the first. He also singled in Abreu in the eighth and ninth.

Abreu and Harrison added RBI singles in the third, and Mendick made it 6-0 with a homer on Faedo's first pitch of the fourth.

White Sox right-hander Vince Velasquez pitched 2 2/3 innings before Martin came in. Velasquez was activated off the injured list before the game after being sidelined by a strained left groin.

Zavala's two-run homer made it 9-0 in the fifth, and Adam Engel's triple got the



Chicago White Sox's Yoan Moncada reacts to his single against the Detroit Tigers in the fourth inning of a baseball game in Detroit, Wednesday, June 15, 2022.

Associated Press

White Sox to double digits in the sixth. Engel was the

last Chicago starter to get a hit. □

# Men, women split on equity gains since Title IX, poll shows

By **COLLIN BINKLEY**

**Associated Press**

Ask a man about gender equality, and you're likely to hear the U.S. has made great strides in the 50 years since the landmark anti-discrimination law Title IX was passed. Ask a woman, and the answer probably will be quite different.

According to a new poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and the National Women's History Museum, most U.S. adults believe the country has made at least some progress toward equality for women since 1972. That's the year Congress passed Title IX, a one-sentence law that forbids discrimination based on sex in education. But there are sharp differences in opinion



**Tennis legend and equality rights advocate Billie Jean King, speaks at a Women's History Month event honoring women athletes in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Title IX, March 9, 2022, on Capitol Hill in Washington.**

**Associated Press**

over just how much headway has been made and in what facets of life.

Some of the widest divisions are, perhaps unsurprisingly, between men and women:

61% of men say the country has made a great deal or a lot of progress toward gender equality, while 37% of women said the same, according to the poll.

Women were more likely to point to only some progress — 50% held that view — while 13% said the country has made just a little or no progress.

"We've fought a lot, we've gained a little bit, but we haven't really gained equality," said Brenda Theiss, 68, a retired optician in Vinemont, Alabama. Progress that started in the '70s seems to have stalled, she said, with continued wage gaps and battles over women's reproductive rights.

Passed in the wake of other seminal civil rights laws, Title IX was intended to expand protections for women into the sphere of education. Today it's often known for its impact on women's sports and the fight against sexual

harassment and assault.

As the nation approaches the law's 50th anniversary, most Americans have positive views about it. Sixty-three percent said they approve of the law, including majorities of men and women. Only 5% did not approve of it, while the rest said they were neutral or not sure.

But Americans are split along several faults when it comes to assessing advancements.

Along with men, Republicans are also more likely to see a great deal or a lot of progress, with 65% holding that view. Among Democrats, 39% said the same.

Among women, those 50 and older are more likely than their younger peers to see a great deal or a lot of progress in specific facets of life, such as in leadership, employment and education opportunities.

Milan Ramsey, 29, said it's "remarkable how far we have come considering how unequal it still feels."

She says sexism is hard to avoid in today's society, whether it's in unequal access to health care or in everyday slights like getting catcalled. But she knows it has been worse. Once, looking at her mom's childhood photos, her mom pointed out a pair of pants that she said was her first pair ever.

"She remembers that because they weren't allowed to wear pants until she was like 7 in public school," said Ramsey, of Santa Monica, California.

As a young girl growing up in the '70s, Karen Dunlap says she benefited from Title IX right away. Soccer leagues for girls started springing up for the first time, she said. Her mom rushed to sign her up.

"I really felt the immediate difference as a kid," said Dunlap, of Vancouver, Washington. "But at the same time, it didn't stay that way."

Dunlap went on to compete in swimming and water polo at Pomona College in California, and she credits Title IX for the opportunity. □

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